

Inverness Covid19 Regional Testing Centre to open for key workers

A drive-through coronavirus testing facility is to open in Inverness as part of the UK Government's UK-wide drive to increase testing for thousands more NHS and other key workers.

The site sits alongside a rapidly expanding network of testing sites being set up around the UK, and is operating on an appointment-only basis for NHS staff and other key workers. The facility will be located at UHI Inverness campus and open on 26 April, it will be piloted for its first few days of operation.

This follows the launch of the UK Government's partnership with universities, research institutes and companies to begin rollout of the network of new labs and field testing sites across the UK, with 35 testing sites opened to date.

This network will provide thousands more PCR swab tests – which are used to identify if you currently have the virus – for critical key workers, starting with NHS front line staff. This means those who test negative for coronavirus can return to work as soon as possible, and those who test positive are able to recover.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

“The UK Government is rapidly scaling up the national effort to boost testing capacity for coronavirus to protect the vulnerable, support our NHS, and ultimately save lives.

“This new service will help end the uncertainty of whether NHS and social care staff and other key workers need to stay at home, meaning those who test negative will be able to return to work.

“This is a national effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners to turn this ambition into a reality and roll out additional capacity to where it is needed.”

Professor John Newton, National Coordinator for the UK Coronavirus Testing Strategy, said:

“New testing sites such as this one are a key pillar of our 5-pillar plan to scale up testing, and are critical in supporting NHS staff and other frontline workers who are isolating at home to return safely to work if the test is negative.

“This is a brilliant example of industries and businesses turning their resources to creating and rolling out mass testing at scale, which will help to deliver on our aim of carrying out 100,000 tests a day across the UK by the end of the month.”

UK Government minister Douglas Ross said:

“This new UK Government funded testing centre in Inverness will help key workers living in the area continue their vital work, helping to look after those who need it most.

“The UK Government has committed to expand our testing capacity right across the UK and this new centre is now one of four throughout Scotland. We will continue to work for everyone in the UK to save lives and protect our NHS.”

The testing centre will offer self-administered tests. Those tested will receive their results within a few days.

The UK Government is also urgently working on setting up a home-testing service for critical key workers, supported by Amazon’s logistics network and other commercial partners.